

## Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-07

AGR-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-01

COME-00 DLOS-04 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05

FEAE-00 FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 IO-13

JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAL-01 ARA-06 STR-04 /157 W

----- 049600

R 131510Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5469

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

?/AMEMBASSY RABAT 491

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 0888

CASABLANCA AND COPENHAGEN FOR FISHERIES ATTACHE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS PFOR EFIN MR

SUBJECT: FISHERIES ACTIVITY IN MAURITANIA

SUMMARY: MAURITANIA IS INVOLVED IN INTENSIVE NEGOTIATION AND RENEGOTIATION OF FISHING AGREEMENTS. MAJOR GOAL IS TO INCREASE INCOME DERIVED FROM FISHING IN MAURITANIAN WATERS. EFFORT IS ALSO BEING MADE TO REGULARIZE FISHING IN WATERS OFF MAURITANIAN-CONTROLLED PORTION OF WESTERN SAHARA. IN FUTURE, ALL COUNTRIES WISHING TO FISH IN MAURITANIAN WATERS CAN EXPECT TO PAY MORE FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS PRIVILEGE. IN ADDITION, GIRM CAN PLAN TO DERIVE LARGER

PERCENTAGE OF ITS FOREIGN EXCHANGE INCOME FROM EXPORT OF FISH PRODUCTS. END SUMMARY.  
END CONFIDENTIAL; BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.

1. FISHING DELEGATIONS: THERE HAVE BEEN INTENSIVE GIRM FISHERIES NEGOTIATIONS SINCE BEGINNING OF YEAR. EIGHT SEPARATE FISHERIES DELEGATIONS REPRESENTING SIX COUNTRIES HAVE ENGAGED IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH MAURITANIAN COUNTER-PARTS. IN ADDITION, SENIOR GIRM FISHERIES DELEGATION WENT TO MADRID. CHRONOLOGY OF ACTIVITY FOLLOWS:

(A) FEBRUARY 1 - GHANIAN DELEGATION CONCLUDED FISHING AGREEMENT WITH GIRM. ACCORD MUST STILL BE APPROVED BY GHANAIAN GOVERNMENT (NOUAKCHOTT A-4).

(B) FEBRUARY 1 - PORTUGUESE FISHING DELEGATION LED BY DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ARRIVED IN NOUAKCHOTT.

(C) FEBRUARY 21 - GREEK FISHING DELEGATION MET WITH DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES IN NOUAKCHOTT.

(D) FEBRUARY 24 - FRENCH FISHING DELEGATION LED BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES ARRIVED IN NOUAKCHOTT.

(E) MARCH 8 - GREEK FISHING DELEGATION LED BY GREEK AMBASSADOR IN TUNIS ARRIVED IN NOUAKCHOTT.

(F) MARCH 12 - PORTUGUESE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES BASEDHIIH DAKAR SIGNED FISHERIES AGREEMENT IN NOUAKCHOTT (LISBON 1793).

(G) MARCH 16 - POLISH DELEGATION LED BY DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN CENTRAL OFFICE OF FISHERIES MET WITH GIRM DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES.

(H) MARCH 17 - MAURITANIAN MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALIZATION AND MINES LED GIRM DELEGATION TO MADRID WHERE FISHING AGREEMENT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SIGNED.

(I) MARCH 30 - USSR FISHING DELEGATION LED BY OFFICIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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FROM MINISTRY OF FISH INDUSTRY ARRIVED IN NOUAKCHOTT.  
END UNCLASSIFIED; BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL.

2. RESULTS OF NEGOTIATIONS: EMBASSY HAS LEARNED FROM VARIETY OF GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY SOURCES THAT MAJOR PURPOSE BEHIND NEGOTIATION AND RENEGOTIATION OF VARIOUS FISHING AGREEMENTS IS TO OBTAIN CONSIDERABLY HIGHER FEE FOR FISH TAKEN FROM MAURITANIAN WATERS. TO BEST OF OUR

KNOWLEDGE, FIRST INSTANCE OF SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED FEE TOOK PLACE IN LATE 1975 WHEN NIGERIANS REPORTEDLY AGREED TO PAY MAURITANIA \$180 PER GROSS REGISTERED TON (GRT) OF FISH TAKEN FROM MAURITANIAN WATERS (NOUAKCHOTT A-75 DATED NOVEMBER 6, 1975). WE HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED THAT GIRM NEGOTIATING POSITION BEGINS AT \$200-220 PER GRT AND CAN BE NEGOTIATED DOWNWARD FROM THERE. FACTORS WHICH PERMIT DOWNWARD REVISION APPARENTLY INCLUDE DEGREE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INCLUDED IN FISHING AGREEMENT, PERCENTAGE OF CATCH OFFLOADED AT NOUADHIBOU FOR LOCAL INDUSTRY, AND CLOSENESS OF POLITICAL TIES. FOR EXAMPLE, PORTUGUESE ARE BEING CHARGED \$158 PER GRT WHILE SPAIN WILL PAY IN RANGE OF \$120 TO \$140. (LARGE SPANISH ECONOMIC DELEGATION, WHICH INCLUDES FISHERIES EXPERTS, IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN NOUAKCHOTT APRIL 21 AND WILL PROBABLY FINALIZE DETAILS OF FISHING AGREEMENT.) PORTUGAL IS IN PROCESS OF OPENING FISHERIES OFFICE IN NOUAKCHOTT. REPRESENTATIVE HAS ALREADY MADE NUMBER OF VISITS TO MAURITANIA. ALTHOUGH GIRM IS BEING SECRETIVE ABOUT DETAILS OF FISHERIES NEGOTIATIONS, INDUSTRY SOURCES BELIEVE JAPAN IS IN LINE FOR FAVORABLE TERMS WHILE CONDITIONS FOR USSR WILL BE SUBJECT TO CLOSE SCRUTINY AND TAILORED ACCORDING TO SOVIET POLICY ON WESTERN SAHARA.

3. FISHING OFF SAHARA: GIRM POLICY ON FISHING IN WATERS OFF MAURITANIAN-CONTROLLED PORTION OF WESTERN SAHARA, I.E. FROM 24TH PARALLEL TO NOUADHIBOU, IS UNDERGOING CHANGE. UNTIL RECENTLY, GIRM HAD PROHIBITED ALL FISHING IN THESE WATERS. IN APRIL 3 CONVERSATION WITH DCM, MAURITANIAN DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES, ABDALLAH OULD ISMAIL, EXPLAINED THAT MAURITANIA IS JUST BEGINNING TO AUTHORIZE VESSELS TO FISH IN THIS ZONE. AGREEMENTS NOW BEING NEGOTIATED SPECIFY IN WHICH ZONE, I.E. NORTH OR

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SOUTH OF NOUADHIBOU, VESSELS MAY OPERATE. PORTUGUESE FISHERIES REPRESENTATIVE TOLD US THAT PORTUGAL OPTED TO FISH SOUTH OF NOUADHIBOU RATHER THAN OFF WESTERN SAHARA. PORTUGUESE REPORTEDLY DECIDED ON SOUTHERN ZONE BECAUSE WATER OFF SAHARA IS MUCH ROUGHER AND THUS MORE DIFFICULT TO FISH. WE SUSPECT THERE WERE ALSO POLITICAL REASONS FOR PORTUGUESE DECISION. SPANISH, ON OTHER HAND, HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO FISH IN ZONE BETWEEN DAKHLA AND NOUADHIBOU, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR IF RECENT AGREEMENT SPECIFIES THIS ZONE. SHOULD A COUNTRY OPT TO FISH IN NORTHERN ZONE, IT WILL TEND TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR MAURITANIA'S OCCUPATION OF SOUTHERN PART OF WESTERN SAHARA. OULD ISMAIL NOTED THAT TAX OR FEE ON FISH TAKEN FROM NORTHERN ZONE WILL BE IDENTICAL TO THAT CHARGED IN SOUTHERN

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INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-07

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JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAL-01 ARA-06 STR-04 /157 W  
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R 131510Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 0888

ZONE WILL BE IDENTICAL TO THAT CHARGED IN SOUTHERN AREA. ON OTHER HAND, GIRM WILL PLACE STRICTER LIMITS ON FISH OFF-TAKE IN NORTHERN ZONE IN ORDER TO CONSERVE FISH IN THIS REGION. OULD ISMAIL ALSO CONFIRMED THAT SOME VESSELS ARE CURRENTLY FISHING ILLEGALLY IN WATERS OFF SAHARA. HE SPECIFICALLY CITED SPANISH BOATS, BUT INDICATED THERE WERE OTHERS WHICH HE DECLINED TO IDENTIFY.

4. SOUTH KOREAN FISHING ACTIVITY: WHEN ASKED ABOUT FUTURE OF SOUTH KOREAN VESSELS IN MAURITANIAN WATERS, OULD ISMAIL WAS RELUCTANT TO SPECULATE IF THERE WOULD BE INCREASE IN NUMBER OF KOREAN VESSELS. HE PRAISED

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EFFICIENCY OF KOREAN FLEET, POINTING OUT THAT IT MAY BE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE ONE OPERATING IN MAURITANIAN WATERS. AT SAME TIME, HE EMPHASIZED, OBVIOUSLY DUE TO POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF ISSUE, MIXED NATURE OF KOREAN OPERATION, I.E. JAPANESE INVOLVEMENT AND FACT THAT VESSELS FLY PANAMIAN FLAG.

5. LACK OF U.S. INTEREST: OULD ISMAIL CONCLUDED CONVERSATION BY EXPRESSING SURPRISE THAT US HAD NEVER SHOWN INTEREST IN CONCLUDING FISHING AGREEMENT WITH MAURITANIA. HE SAID HE HOPED DAY IS NOT FAR OFF WHEN US FISHING INDUSTRY TAKES MORE INTEREST IN MAURITANIAN WATERS.

6. COMMENT: GIRM IS CLEARLY MAKING MAJOR PUSH TO INCREASE FOREIGN EXCHANGE INCOME DERIVED FROM FISHERIES RESOURCES. IN 1973, MAURITANIAN EARNED 9.4 MILLION SDRS (8 PERCENT OF TOTAL EXPORTS) THROUGH EXPORT OF FISH PRODUCTS. IN 1976, GIRM PROJECTS THAT FISH EXPORTS WILL ACCOUNT FOR 19.3 MILLION SDRS OR 12 PERCENT OF TOTAL EXPORTS. IN 1975 FISH EXPORTS REPLACED COPPER AS NUMBER TWO FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNER FOR COUNTRY. UNLESS PRICE OF COPPER RISES SHARPLY, THIS TREND IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE. FISH TAKEN FROM WATERS OFF MAURITANIAN-CONTROLLED PORTION OF WESTERN SAHARA SHOULD ADD SUBSTANTIALLY IN YEARS AHEAD TO GIRM FOREIGN EXCHANGE INCOME. HANDYSIDE

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FISHING INDUSTRY, TERRITORIAL WATERS, FISHING AGREEMENTS, NEGOTIATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 13 APR 1976  
**Decapton Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decapton Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** saccheem  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976NOUAKC00888  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760139-1129  
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**Line Count:** 255  
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**Office:** ACTION OES  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 5  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** saccheem  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 14 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <14 APR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <09 AUG 2004 by saccheem>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** FISHERIES ACTIVITY IN MAURITANIA SUMMARY: MAURITANIA IS INVOLVED IN INTENSIVE NEGOTIATION AND  
**TAGS:** EFIS, PFOR, EFIN, MR  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006